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P 041133Z APR 06
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5000
INFO RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 0014
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 0006
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0136
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY 0001

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ATHENS 000900

SIPDIS

CODEL
SIPDIS

H FOR PETROSINO AND CARTER
H PLEASE PASS TO CODEL HASTERT
EUR/SE, SA/INS, EAP/BCLTV

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OREP](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [AFIN](#) [GR](#) [IN](#) [NP](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE FOR CODEL HASTERT (APR 8-9)

REF: STATE 49265

¶1. Embassy Athens warmly welcomes and grants country clearance for Representative J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and accompanying members of his delegation. The Control Officer for the April 8-9 visit is Karen Grissette. She can be reached during office hours through April 6 at 30-210-720-2551. She departs for Iraklion the evening of April 6 and can be reached on her cellular at 30-693-249-5019 or at the hotel GDM Megaron at 30-281-030-5400. Ms. Grissette's fax number until April 6 is 30-210-729-4307 and her unclassified e-mail addresses are (office) GrissetteKE@state.gov and KGrissette@aol.com. Please send all e-mail to both e-mail addresses. Additionally, Ms. Grissette can be reached via the Embassy's after hours duty receptionist at 30-210-729-4444.

¶2. Reservations have been made at the GDM Megaron Hotel, 9 ID. Beaufort, Iraklion 71202, Crete, Greece. The hotel phone number is 30-281-030-5300; fax 30-281-030-5400; website www.gdmegaron.gr. We understand CODEL's fiscal data cable will authorize actual room rates and embassy will pay for rooms out of fiscal data. Room rates will be charged in euros, and these rates are inclusive of taxes and breakfast. M&IE, plus any additional allowance, will be provided in Euros to each traveler authorized per diem. Travelers are expected to pay their own hotel incidental expenses prior to departing. If a room reserved will not be used, the reservation must be canceled 24 hours prior to expected arrival date, otherwise the CODEL or traveler will be responsible for the cost of the unused room.

¶3. The official schedule for Iraklion will begin on Saturday, April 8. The schedule will include a country briefing by DCM Thomas Countryman and Captain Sale, NSA Souda Bay, as well as cultural activities.

¶4. It is important that all visitors carefully read the information and instructions provided below. Post wants to ensure the best possible service to all official visitors and will work closely to arrange details of each visit.

¶5. Transportation is being arranged as requested and as per e-mail correspondence from the control officer.

¶6. Documents required: Diplomatic and official passport holders must have Greek diplomatic visas, a valid Schengen visa or diplomatic ID from any other Schengen country, in addition to their passport, in order to enter Greece. The Embassy will be unable to obtain plane-side visas for USG employees arriving in Greece without proper documentation.

Holders of tourist passports do not/not require visas. USG employees who plan to operate a motor vehicle while in Greece must be in possession of a valid U.S. drivers license as well as a valid International Drivers License and must carry proof of third party liability insurance while operating the vehicle.

17. Embassy DSS agents will provide information to the CODEL doctor and accompanying Special Agent on medical facilities in Iraklion. We strongly recommend that TDYers bring with them proof of current medical insurance coverage and medevac coverage if obtained.

18. Each visitor requiring support from the embassy, regardless of length of stay, must bring/forward fiscal data to pay for direct costs of the visit. Each military TDYer requesting embassy support should be able to provide the sponsoring military entity at post fiscal data, even if staying at post less than thirty days. Each agency, organization or visiting delegation will be charged for the actual costs attributed to its visit. Direct charge costs include, but are not limited to: American and LES overtime (for such services as airport expediting, cashier accommodation exchange, control room staffing, representational event support and costs incurred by NSA Souda Bay), travel and per diem costs incurred by post personnel in support of visitor's field travel, rental of vehicles and other equipment, long distance telephone calls, office supplies, gasoline and other vehicle maintenance costs, departure tax and other airport fees. Post will not provide service if fiscal data is not provided for the direct charges.

19. Currency: Greece is a member of the European Monetary

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Union, and the Euro is the currency of the country. Accommodation exchange and reverse accommodation will be provided as per e-mail correspondence with the control officer. However, ATMs are readily available throughout the country; they will accept U.S. debit cards. In addition, most banks and major hotels provide accommodation exchange services, and accommodation exchange is available 24 hours per day at the GDM Megaron.

110. Office space/laptops/mobile phones: CODEL control room will have computer connectivity and accessibility as per CODEL request, and hotel GDM Megaron has wireless connectivity for a fee in rooms and free in public areas. For those employees planning on bringing laptops and modems to use in their hotels, please remember that this equipment can be used for processing unclassified (non-SBU) information only. Current here is 220 volt, 50 cycles, and outlets are two-pronged. Embassy will provide and pre-position 10 transformers as requested. Laptops are not permitted in controlled access areas of the Embassy. European GSM mobile phones function normally in Greece.

111. Presidential Directive - Trafficking in Persons: All TDY personnel are reminded that President Bush has signed a National Security Presidential Directive to advance the fight against trafficking in persons. The United States is committed to eradicate trafficking both domestically and abroad. Trafficking in persons exists in Greece. A significant number of the people involved in prostitution, pornography and the sex tourism phenomenon, are trafficked. They are compelled by force, fraud and coercion to submit to sexual exploitation. TDY personnel are advised that any involvement with the commercial sex industry is unacceptable in light of the diplomatic and foreign policy goals of the United States and the ethical standards of the Department of State and this Mission. Embassy Management will not tolerate any such involvement by Mission personnel and, in this regard, will enforce all relevant regulations regarding conduct and suitability of U.S. Government employees stationed abroad.

¶12. Security information:

¶A. Embassy Athens is designated "high" for indigenous terrorism. In the past, local Greek terrorist groups have targeted prominent Greeks as well as certain non-Greek Officials, including Americans. We believe that the threat to official US Government personnel on short-term assignments to Greece or visiting for tourism is relatively low. The indigenous groups historically have engaged in extensive operational surveillance over long periods of time. In 2003 and again in 2004, the Greek Government made significant progress to combat domestic terrorism by successfully convicting the leader and key hit men of the November 17 terrorist organization and of the ELA. 17N was responsible for assassinating prominent Greeks and five members of the US Mission over the course of its 30-year history. Convicted ELA members were responsible for several bombings, attempted murders and were involved in at least one assassination. While these convictions likely impacted on the operational capabilities of 17N and ELA, it is too soon to assess whether the threat from domestic terrorism is completely eliminated. There have been several attacks against Greek police over the past 2 years. We urge vigilance and caution, as the worldwide threat from other terrorist groups against Americans in general remains high. Official Americans should assume they are potential targets.

¶B. Over the past year, the U.S. Embassy has experienced numerous bomb threats, protest marches, and anti-U.S. demonstrations. These protests are generally peaceful though a few provoked random acts of violence. Travelers to Greece are advised that protests or demonstrations could occur at any time; unwitting observers or bystanders might be identified, to their disadvantage, as Americans.

¶C. Crime is rated "medium" in Greece. For TDY visitors, pick-pocketing and purse snatching are the most common crimes. Taxis are generally safe though metered cabs are recommended. Taxis too will often pick up more than one passenger unless prior arrangements are made. Crimes of opportunity (thefts, break-ins, and occasional scams) are on the rise. Travelers should be especially cautious with wallets, purses, and parcels when traveling on crowded streets, public buses, trolleys, and/or subways. There have

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been several instances of motorcyclists approaching cars stuck in traffic, reaching through open windows or smashing closed ones, and stealing whatever is within reach. We have also recently learned of a new method in which motorcyclists open the trunk of a vehicle and remove the contents. The Embassy recommends keeping purses, parcels, handbags, etc. out of sight under the seat or on the floor of the car. Windows should be kept closed and doors locked. Pedestrians may also be confronted by beggars and other street people who may attempt to divert attention, then steal unprotected valuables (either by pick-pocketing or snatch-and-grab techniques. Women are generally safe from violent crime in Greece. Men are aggressive by American standards however when pursuing women.

¶D. Traffic in Greek urban areas, especially Athens and Thessaloniki, is chaotic. Greece leads the European Union in traffic fatalities. Road rage is common. Accidents often lead to fist fights. Drivers in Greece should exercise caution and common sense. Drivers and pedestrians alike should exercise extreme caution when operating motor vehicles or when walking along roadways. Moreover, tourists who rent motorbikes either on the Greek mainland or its islands must wear helmets and must take special precautions on the local roads that are typically poorly maintained and frequently pothole-ridden. Greece also leads the European Union in motorcycle deaths.

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